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Economic and Social Council

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Item 4 (p) of the provisional agenda*
Items for information: Follow-up to Economic and Social Council policy decisions

Policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session (see E/2009/24), the present note is submitted to brief the Commission on policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly adopted in 2009 that are relevant to the work of the Statistical Commission. The note, furthermore, indicates the actions taken and proposed to be taken by the Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division, in an effort to respond to the requests made by the Council. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2010/1.

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I. Follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

1. In its resolution 2009/29 on the role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, in light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16, the Economic and Social Council reaffirmed the need to continue to strengthen the Council as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination and thus promote the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Assembly resolutions, in particular resolutions 50/227, 57/270 B and 61/16.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

2. Ever since the Economic and Social Council invited the Statistical Commission to serve as the intergovernmental focal point for the review of indicators used by the United Nations system for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (see Council resolutions 1999/55 and 2000/27), the Commission has been discussing the technical aspects of development indicators on a continual basis.

3. At its forty-first session, the Commission will consider the report of the Secretary-General on indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (E/CN.3/2009/16).

4. The Statistical Commission, like the rest of the functional commissions, had reported to the Council the completion of the review of its methods of work in 2005 (see E/2005/24). In particular, the Commission had addressed the issue of more efficient time management. It had also put in place a mechanism to ensure the continuity of its Bureau and cooperation with the Council, including through a standing agenda item on Council decisions. The Commission also enhanced its official programme through panel discussions and other side events during its thirty-eighth, thirty-ninth and fortieth sessions with multi-stakeholder participation. The Commission has found the procedures satisfactory and it intends to continue to implement and refine them at its forty-first session. In particular, the Bureau has a continued mandate to streamline the agenda (see E/2007/24).

II. Multi-year programme of work for annual ministerial reviews of the Economic and Social Council

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

5. As mandated by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2006/44, a meeting of the Bureau of the Council with the chairpersons of the functional

commissions is to be held annually in the early part of the year. The Council adopted its first multi-year work programme for the annual ministerial-level substantive reviews in October 2007. The 2009 review focused on the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health". In its decision 2008/258, the Council also decided to adopt the following themes for its annual ministerial-level substantive reviews for 2010 and 2011: (a) 2010: "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women"; and (b) 2011: "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education". The substantive contributions of the Council's functional commissions and expert bodies are considered essential for the success of the reviews.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

6. The Chairman of the Statistical Commission participated in the meeting of the Bureau of the Council with the chairpersons of the functional commissions in January 2009, via videoconferencing, and provided input to the Council's 2009 annual ministerial review on the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health". A representative of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission will also participate in the meeting of the Bureau of the Council with the functional commissions in late January 2010, to brief the Council on the Statistical Commission's contribution to the 2010 annual ministerial review on the theme of "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women". The Bureau representative will brief the Bureau of the Council on the Commission's methodological work in the area of gender statistics, in particular the recent efforts by Friends of the Chair to develop indicators on violence against women.

7. The Commission continuously works on all statistical subject matters to improve the availability and quality of baseline statistics. Furthermore, the Commission is the intergovernmental focal point for the review of indicators used by the United Nations system and accordingly guides the work of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, which could feed into the preparation of the annual ministerial-level substantive reviews.

III. Follow-up to Council resolutions on strengthening national capacity in statistics and on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

8. At the initiative of the Statistical Commission, the Council adopted two resolutions in 2005 and 2006, one on strengthening national capacity in statistics (2006/6) and the other on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme (2005/13), in which it requested an intensification of efforts to support national statistical programmes in strengthening their capacity, in the context of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census round and beyond.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

9. At its forty-first session, the Commission will consider specific follow-up actions to Economic and Social Council resolutions 2005/13 and 2006/6 under its agenda item 4 (a) on "Population and housing censuses" and 4 (m) on "Statistical capacity-building". The documentation presented under these items describes in detail activities undertaken by the Statistics Division and by its partner agencies to improve the availability and quality of data in supporting the 2010 World Population and Housing Census round and activities undertaken to improve the coordination of technical cooperation activities.

IV. Improving the collection, reporting and analysis of data to enhance knowledge on trends in specific areas of crime

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

10. In its resolution 2009/25, the Council noted the importance of relevant United Nations indicators and instruments for the collection and analysis of accurate, reliable and comparable data on all relevant aspects of specific crime issues, and recognized the urgent need to improve the quality, scope and completeness of data concerning international crime trends and specific crime issues for the purpose of developing evidence-based policies for crime prevention and the operation of criminal justice systems. The Council also underscored the importance of improving data-collection tools in order to ensure a simple and more efficient process, thus encouraging and motivating a greater number of Member States to submit the required information on time and ensuring a more representative assessment, at the international level, of all relevant aspects of specific crime issues, and recognized the importance of the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the regular collection of information through the United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3021 (XXVII) on crime prevention and control and Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/48 on crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of development. In addition, the Council requested, among other things, that the Secretary-General, in coordination with the Statistical Commission, report to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its twentieth session, on the implementation of that resolution.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

11. At its forty-first session, the Commission will consider a note by the Secretary-General on the report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on statistics on drugs and drug use and crime statistics (E/CN.3/2010/19).

V. Mainstreaming gender perspectives

A. Action requested by the Economic and Social Council

12. In its resolution 2008/34, the Council reaffirmed its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (see A/52/3/Rev.1), recalled its resolutions 2001/41, 2002/23, 2003/49, 2004/4, 2005/31, 2006/36 and 2007/33 and also reaffirmed the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit to actively promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres and to further undertake to strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations system in the area of gender.

13. In 2007, the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/133 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, in which it requested the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to develop and propose a set of possible indicators on violence against women, building on the work undertaken by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, in order to assist States in assessing the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women, with a view to allowing its consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-second session and by the Statistical Commission at the earliest opportunity.

B. Actions taken and proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

14. In March 2007, the Statistical Commission held a joint panel discussion with the Commission on the Status of Women on the latter's priority theme for 2007, "The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child". The panel discussion, which was part of the interaction between individual functional commissions, was very well received (see A/62/89-E/2007/76).

15. At its fortieth session, the Commission considered a note by the Secretary-General on the report of the Friends of the Chair on the indicators on violence against women (E/CN.3/2009/13) and adopted the proposed set of indicators as an interim set and a first step. It also requested that the Friends of the Chair, under the continued leadership of Mexico, proceed with its work (E/2009/24, decision 40/110).

VI. Policies and programmes involving youth

A. Action requested by the General Assembly

16. In its resolution 64/130, the General Assembly, recalling the World Programme of Action for Youth, which it adopted in its resolutions 50/81 and 62/126, and that in its resolution 62/126, it had requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, through the Commission for Social Development at its forty-seventh session, requested the Secretary-General, among other things, to intensify efforts to further develop and propose a set of possible indicators linked to the World Programme of Action for Youth and the proposed

goals and targets, in order to assist States in assessing the situation of youth, with a view to allowing it to be considered by the Commission for Social Development and by the Statistical Commission at the earliest opportunity.

B. Actions proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

17. During the forty-first session of the Statistical Commission, the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will organize a side event to brief delegates on the process of developing a set of possible indicators and to initiate a debate on how the Statistical Commission could be most effectively involved.

VII. Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities

A. Action requested by the General Assembly

18. In its resolution 64/131, the General Assembly, recalling the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which recognize persons with disabilities as both development agents and beneficiaries in all aspects of development and its previous resolutions on internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and concerned that the lack of data and information on disability and the situation of persons with disabilities at the national level contributes to the invisibility of persons with disabilities in official statistics, presenting an obstacle to achieving development planning and implementation that is inclusive of persons with disabilities, (a) requested the Secretary-General to disseminate widely and promote the use of the Guidelines and Principles for the Development of Disability Statistics and the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses and to facilitate technical assistance, within existing resources, including the provision of assistance for capacity-building of Member States, in particular to developing countries; and (b) encouraged Member States to make use of statistics, to the extent possible, to integrate a disability perspective in reviewing their progress towards realizing the Millennium Development Goals for all. It also requested the Secretary-General to submit information on the implementation of that resolution during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly within the report requested by the Assembly in paragraph 13 (b) of its resolution 63/150.

B. Actions proposed by the Statistical Commission and the United Nations Statistics Division

19. At its forty-first session, the Commission will consider a note by the Secretary-General on the report of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (E/CN.3/2010/20).